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ABSTRACT

Approaches to developing a successful marketing program for universities that is fair to both students and the academic integrity of the institution are considered. A comprehensive marketing plan includes market research, positioning, strategy formulation; recruitment/admission, communications, curriculum evaluation, retention, and evaluation. Good marketing begins with determining a market position; that is, differentiating what an institution offers in relation to other institutions. To arrive at a market position an institution must define its mission, philosophy, and goals. Differentiated marketing, or market segmentation, calls for identifying various markets or submarkets and targeting communication to each one. Although enrollment forecasts and projects are difficult, an institution must have a reasonably accurate estimate of how many students will enroll in order to accurately plan budgets, faculty, programs, and facilities. Marketing, as a communications process, goes beyond promotion and advertising. It involves assessing the needs and interests of potential students and promoting the programs. Parents have a significant influence on the choice of a college. Contacts, such as current students, alumni, college staff, high school counselors and teachers, are not equally effective in their recruitment efforts. Financial aid information and the way financial aid is packaged need to be assessed. In addition, student retention is a vital part of marketing, and an institution needs to research the reasons its students withdraw. A market audit or evaluation will help an institution review its policies, practices, and procedures in marketing. A bibliography is appended. (SW)

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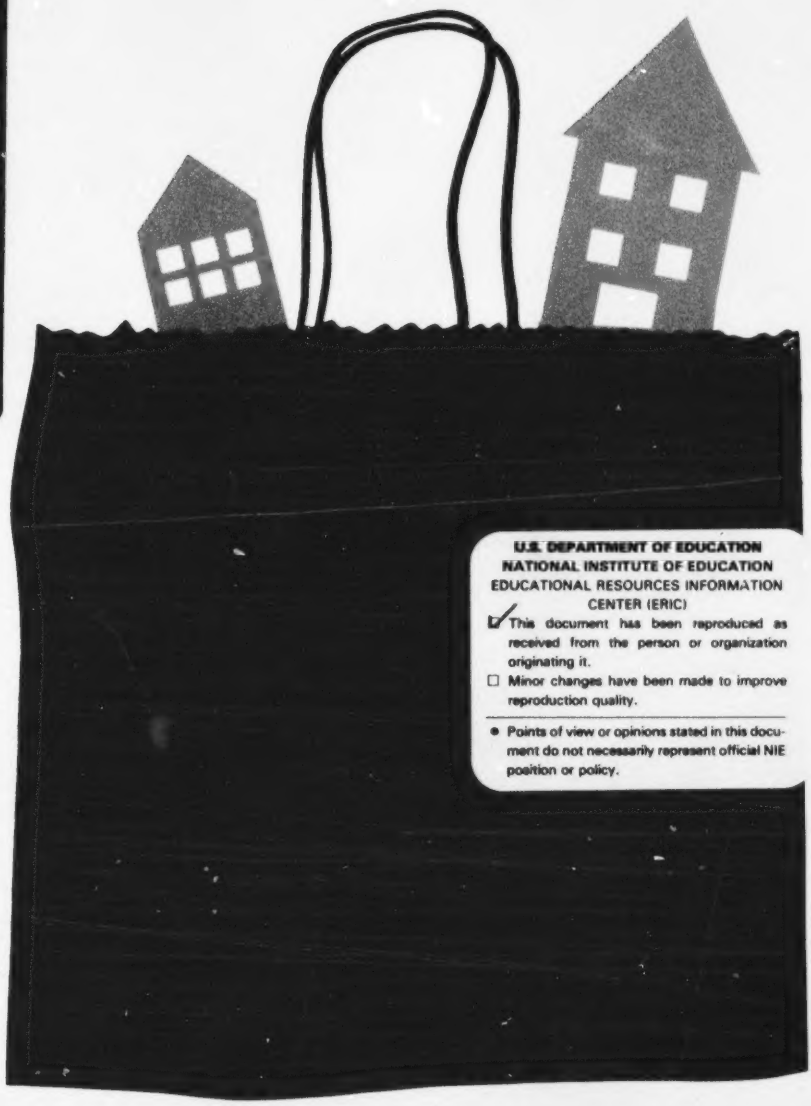
Marketing in Higher Education

Stanley M. Grabowski



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Marketing in Higher Education

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Foreword

It is now an accepted fact that in the 1980s most institutions, except perhaps the very elite, cannot remain passive in their efforts to attract new students and still maintain their enrollments. This is especially true of the small, rural institutions that lack visibility and a convenient population from which to draw their students. However, to many in academe, the concept of "marketing" has the negative connotations of hucksterism, flashy advertising and publicity, and insensitivity to the academic process.

While this may be true in some cases, it is far from the objective of a sound marketing plan. For a marketing program to succeed, an institution must not only be able to attract enough new students to maintain its enrollment but to attract the type of students who will complete their course of study. In the long run, the success of a marketing plan depends on an institution's ability to develop a sound academic program that meets the educational needs of its students and its ability to honestly portray this program in its marketing plan.

To do this, many steps need to take place before a successful marketing program can be launched. In this Research Report, Stanley M. Grabowski, professor of education and chairman of the Department of Community College and Continuing Education at Boston University, reviews the process and involvement that is needed to develop a successful marketing program that is fair to both students and the academic integrity of the institution. Essential to Dr. Grabowski's analysis is the point that, for an institution to develop a successful marketing program, it must have something to market. This means that before a marketing program can be instituted, there must be an analysis of what the institution has to offer and a realistic appraisal of what type of students the institution can attract and what type of competition it is facing. The purpose of this Research Report is to provide a review of these and other elements of a marketing program so that an institution may either have a good foundation to establish a marketing program or be better able to analyze its current marketing activities.

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Overview

The transition in higher education, begun during the student protests in the 1960s, has been accelerated by the twin specters of decreasing numbers of traditional college-age students and the increasing cost of operations caused by inflation. Higher education has gone from a seller's market to a buyer's market. Nearly every college and university has turned to marketing as a means of survival.

Many institutions are either marketing in a haphazard fashion or are equating it with advertising and publicity. Marketing is an all-embracing process that includes all elements of an institution. Its ultimate purpose is to attract, matriculate, and graduate students.

A comprehensive marketing plan is required for effective results. Such a plan should be prepared with the blessing of the president and with the cooperation of the entire college community, including the faculty and the students. Outside consultants may be helpful, but they are not sufficient to carry the responsibility of an on-going marketing effort. One individual at a high level of administration, such as a vice president, should be directly responsible to the president for all aspects of marketing.

A marketing plan begins with an institution looking at itself to determine what kind of posture or position it wants to assume in marketing vis-a-vis other institutions. It must ask itself what it wants to do that other institutions are not doing or not doing well.

A market position is based on several factors: a mission/goal statement, the institution's image as perceived by its publics, the kind of students currently attending the school, and the programs it offers. Among the questions a marketing position addresses is whether an institution should expand and broaden its market. These days it seems imperative for institutions to seek students beyond the traditional 17-to-22 age bracket. In addition, institutions should look to new markets of part-time adult students, blacks, Hispanics, and transfer students from two-year institutions. However, these efforts must be undertaken with caution and only after the present programs have been scrutinized.

Any marketing effort must be student-oriented, assessing and serving the needs and interests of students. However, no institution of higher education should rely solely upon student desires; instead, a school must consider student preferences in the context of its mission and goals in order to preserve the integrity of its programs.

Marketing procedures in higher education should be structured according to the way prospects choose colleges. The term "admissions funnel" is often used to describe the steps prospects follow after they have decided to attend college and begin to narrow down the number of institutions they are considering to the one they finally select. There are many academic and nonacademic factors influencing the final choice of a college. Family, friends, and former students seem to make the most significant impact upon this choice.

Colleges and universities spend a considerable amount of money on their recruitment efforts, often competing with several other institutions for the same prospects. Such competitive efforts are unnecessary squandering of

needed resources; in fact, they can be counterproductive. Realistically, an institution would spend its money best by seeking applicants from its primary market, that is, applicants who are most similar to current students and who are most likely to enroll.

Forecasting enrollments is a risky business, but it is necessary for short-term and long-term planning. The usual method, using demographic factors alone to predict enrollments, must be enhanced by using more comprehensive and sophisticated models. One example is the student choice model, which considers personal characteristics of students, steps they experienced in the admissions process, and the average scores of the characteristics of the other college choices of a student.

Marketing, as a communications process, goes beyond promotion and advertising. It is a two-way street involving the institution and its constituencies, first in assessing the needs and interests of potential students and then in promoting the programs. However, an institution must first take care that its internal communications processes are in order before proceeding to establish a communications pattern with prospective students.

There are numerous techniques an institution may employ in communicating with prospects, and each institution must determine which ones will be most appropriate for its purposes. Traditional promotional and advertising techniques seem to work better than gimmicky ones. In general, quality is all-important in promotional material.

Parents have a significant influence on the choice of a college. Contacts, such as current students, alumni, college staff, high school counselors and teachers, as well as parents, are not equally effective in their recruitment efforts.

The cost of attending college is so important that it must be determined in conjunction with demand and institution costs. There are several tuition pricing models available for consideration. Financial aid information and the way financial aid is packaged need to be tested before promotional materials are published.

Student retention is a vital part of marketing, and an institution needs to research the reasons its students withdraw. Sometimes it is the fault of the institution, either because the environment is not conducive or because students receive an inaccurate picture of the school through misinformation or false advertising.

A market audit or evaluation will help an institution review its policies, practices, and procedures in marketing. The ethical standards used in the marketing process merit serious consideration.

Every institution, but particularly small, private colleges, can profit from marketing.

The Need for Systematic Marketing

Higher education has been in transition for several years, and this transition will continue at an accelerated rate through the 1980s. The expansion that began after World War II continued into the early 1970s; then enrollments began to decline. Several hundred small colleges already have gone out of existence, and many more are on the verge of doing so. Indeed, as the result of a declining birth rate, the number of traditional college-age students, between 17 and 22, is steadily declining, with the greatest slump slated for the mid-1980s.

Critical as the reduced numbers of potential students may be, there are numerous other factors that may contribute to a decline in college enrollments: Youths are questioning the usefulness of college degrees in light of their societal values, the myth that more education translates into better paying jobs has been shattered, and young people are searching for lucrative positions that require technical skills rather than education. Proprietary schools are luring students with the promise of high-paying jobs. Some young people are postponing college in favor of work or travel. And student financial aid is decreasing while tuition costs are increasing.

Other factors contributing to changes in higher education include equality of opportunity, open-door admissions, the concept of lifelong learning, more leisure time, continuing education for the professions, and nontraditional approaches.

The combination of a buyer's market resulting from a decline in the growth of enrollments, a change in the relationship between higher education and the public, and internal forces within institutions such as changing patterns of institutional governance, is forcing institutions to reexamine their missions, goals, and policies. Their success will hinge upon their ability to recognize and assess new trends and to consider them as opportunities instead of threats (Lahti 1977–78).

Some institutions made mistakes during this period of adjustment: They failed to recognize there was a problem of declining enrollments; they ignored the problem; they attempted too little too late; and faculty and staff did not assume individual responsibility (Tatham 1978).

As a result of what has happened and what is now happening, most institutions of higher education are turning to marketing as a means of survival. However, many institutions are going about marketing in a haphazard way (Litten 1980). The results are poor because there is a lack of appreciation and understanding of the complexity and comprehensiveness of marketing and its place in a total institutional program. Marketing is not merely a series of discrete and isolated activities; it is an integrative operation (Krachenberg 1972).

A survey of 350 private colleges and universities showed that almost 90 percent of the respondents equated marketing with promotion (Murphy and McGarrity 1978, p. 253). Yet marketing is far more then promotion. It is defined in various ways, especially as it is related to higher education: a frame of mind that raises questions (Litten 1980); an understanding of people's wishes and problems (Fram 1974–75); a process of reasoning (Keim 1978); a methodology, "a series of exchange relationships" (Ihlanfeldt 1980,

p. 13); a matching process of identified needs to an institution's goals and capacity (Engledow and Anderson 1978); "a managed, controlled, planned, ongoing activity, designed to implement the purposes of the organization" (Trivett 1978, p. 2); and a perspective that permeates every aspect of the institution (Leach 1978). A technical definition of marketing accepted generally in higher education is the one given by Kotler (1975):

> *Marketing is the analysis, planning, implementation, and control of carefully formulated programs designed to bring about voluntary exchanges of values with target markets for the purpose of achieving organizational objectives. It relies heavily on designing the organization's offering in terms of the target markets' needs and desires, and on using effective pricing, communication, and distribution to inform, motivate, and serve markets (p. 5).*

Colleges and universities that take marketing seriously must be prepared for the far-reaching implications of such a decision. Ethical marketing demands a total institutional commitment, and effective marketing requires an integration and coordination of all the activities.

Marketing is not easy and does not yield quick solutions. It may be difficult because it cannot be separated from institutional planning, which may lead to dramatic changes in the institutional structure and programs (Ihlanfeldt 1980; Krachenberg 1972; Caren and Kemerer 1979). In a word, marketing invites change (Keim 1978).

The starting point for marketing must come with the full cooperation of the president and board of trustees because marketing requires a rethinking of the institutional mission (Caren and Kemerer 1979). Mayhew (1976) concluded, on the basis of a study of more than 100 institutions, that real change on campus will occur only if central administration is involved in the process, specifically the president. Whether they realize it or not college presidents are both image makers and image leaders for their institutions (Ihlanfeldt 1980). The president must understand and support the principles of marketing (Barton and Treadwell 1978). He or she must be involved, at a minimum, as the orchestrator or synchronizer of all marketing elements (Fram 1979), thereby giving the impetus for the faculty to develop mission and goal statements for the institution (Mayhew 1976). Unless the president is truly marketing oriented, it is unlikely that other officers and staff members can make any significant impact on marketing (Fram 1979).

If the president does not take full, direct responsibility for marketing, a senior administrator at the provost or vice president level should. The person who is designated "director of marketing" must be in charge of marketing research, the institutional image, and enrollment forecasting; coordinate marketing-related activities; prepare the marketing plan; and be a source of information. He or she also must oversee others who are directly responsible for admissions, student retention, counseling, faculty duties, alumni relations, placement, institutional research, and development (Fram 1979).

Systematic marketing in higher education must be seen as one of several coordinated and integrated functions (Allen 1978). Kotler (1976) cautions that "there is nothing worse than contradictory messages and signals coming from a given college. The various components of the marketing effort must present a harmonious picture of the marketplace" (p. 62). Unfortunately, studies show that only two out 11 institutions use an integrated and coordinated approach to marketing. In other institutions a single-dimension orientation such as admissions or public relations is employed in place of a total marketing orientation (Fram 1975, p. 224).

Too often, faculty, staff, and administrators believe the purpose of an institution is to serve their own needs rather than those of students (Allen 1978). Faculty members need to be stimulated "to realize they are like a cottage industry—seemingly self-sufficient and autonomous but very much dependent upon the whole institution and external market realities" (Johnson 1978, p. 4). After all, faculty exercise a critical role in marketing through the control of curriculum and programs as well as through their influence on policies (Litten 1981). In addition, faculty members can serve as salespersons to students by providing guidance, empathy for students' problems, and realistic information on using their education after graduation. Such faculty behavior can help new students as well as retain current students (Fram 1973).

Some institutions may find it advisable to hire outside consultants or commercial agencies to assist in marketing if specific expertise is not found within the institution. However, outsiders should be used with caution and should be supervised closely by the institution (Litten 1980) because the efforts of outsiders may be fragmented, and they may be unable to rally campus-wide involvement (Caren and Kemerer 1979).

Market Plan

A rational approach to marketing in higher education is to develop a plan—"careful planning rather than a crisis should be the reason for initiating a marketing plan" (Gaither 1979, p. 60). A marketing plan includes both short-range and long-range strategies; changing social and economic conditions as well as the changing attitudes of students, parents, and counselors influence both strategies (Ivens 1979).

A comprehensive marketing plan includes market research, positioning, strategy formulation, recruitment/admissions, communications, curriculum evaluation, retention, and evaluation (Gaither 1979). In a national study, Blackburn (1979, p. 179) found that the five marketing techniques given a high rating for effectiveness by most respondents were: offering differentiation, positioning, segmentation, program development, and marketing information systems. Table 1 shows the percentage of level of use and the rank of perceived effectiveness for each of 16 marketing techniques.

Table 1: Level of Use and Perceived Effectiveness for Marketing Techniques

Technique	*Percentage of Level of Use*	*Rank of Perceived Effectiveness*
Offering differentiation	77.1	1
Market concept	77.1	11
Publicity	74.2	13
Segmentation	65.7	4
Positioning	64.8	2
Program development	62.1	6
Advertising	60.8	10
Marketing information systems	60.3	5
Market plan	45.7	3
Current demand analysis	41.0	8
Demand forecasting	31.8	9
Free market expertise	31.4	14
Pricing	29.4	12
Advertising research/posttesting	21.7	15
Paid marketing consultant	16.8	7
Advertising research/pretesting	6.3	16

(Adapted from Blackburn 1979, pp. 172-74)

Positioning

During the past five years, numerous conferences, workshops, institutes, books, and journal articles dealing with marketing techniques such as direct mail and determining potential enrollment numbers have often disregarded overall institutional planning. Good marketing begins with determining a market position, that is, differentiating what an institution offers in relation to other institutions (Knaus 1979; Leister 1975).

The relative market share position of different institutions with regard to programs may be determined by using a positioning matrix made up of eight definitional segments and two market share measures: an index of market share of mobile students (those living in a drawing area but attending a college outside that area) and the adjusted market share of the local market. The eight segments and their descriptions as used by Church and Gillingham (n.d.) are:

> *Ivy League*—enjoys an excellent academic reputation for its programs and applies high entry standards. Thus, it draws widely, and only a small percentage of its local students are granted admission.
> *Second Best*—much like an Ivy League university; however, it imposes slightly lower admission standards and thus usually attracts a greater number of students.
> *Widely Accessible But Good Reputation*—has been able to build an above-average reputation for itself and thus is able to draw widely despite the fact that its admission standards are relatively low.
> *Aspiring Local Boy*—has an excellent local reputation, enabling it to take a relatively large share of its home market; however, it has not been able to attract a large percentage of its students from outside its home market.
> *Well Respected Local Boy*—much like the Aspiring Local Boy except it is practically unknown to students outside its home drawing area.
> *Mixed-Up Boy*—it appears to show few strengths but may have some potential to improve its position.
> *Problem Local Boy*—has practically no reputation outside its home market; it may be trying to build a strong reputation through relatively high admission standards, which accounts for its fairly low share of the local market, or, as is more likely, its standards are relatively low and its local reputation is relatively poor.
> *Last Resort*—has a very poor reputation and probably has very low entrance standards; it is unable to draw students to its program from outside its home market, and even those prospective students in its local market would prefer to go elsewhere. The institution is totally dependent on students who cannot afford to go away from home. (pp. 6–7).

Applying this approach to 15 Ontario universities' arts programs, Church and Gillingham (n.d., pp. 7-8) reached the following conclusions:

1. Product market positions differ significantly among universities,

which likely is a reflection of differences in reputation and standards.
2. These differences are consistent across programs, possibly indicating that a university's overall reputation may extend to individual programs.
3. "There are significant differences in the average adapted market share of local students" (p. 7), possibly due to the fact that several institutions offer the same program.
4. An individual program's percentage of enrollees reflects the percentage of all the mobile students enrolled.

To arrive at a market position an institution must define its mission, philosophy, and goals. It must identify its strengths to use in providing programs for students, and it must identify its weaknesses in order to attract students consistent with the quality of its offerings (Mudie 1978).

This kind of market positioning requires institutional planning, including market research (Krachenberg 1972). Conjectures, guestimates, traditions, whims, and vague notions regarding resource allocations, faculty deployment, quality of courses, and potential markets simply will not do. Administrators, staff, and faculty must compile realistic, solid, objective, and specific data. Thompson (1978) has put it very strongly:

> *They can no longer afford to define institutional quality solely in terms of academic prestige. They can no longer afford to ignore public concerns about what is taught, how much is learned, and who is enrolled. Instead, resource allocation must take account of its effect on institutional revenue and quality must be redefined in terms of the benefits and costs as perceived by consumers of edcational services (p. 4).*

Positioning answers questions regarding the role and function of an institution. For example, it asks:

- What position does the institution hold in the mind of the public and of prospective students?
- What position does the institution want to hold and be known by?
- Which competing institutions hold a similar position and therefore need to "outgunned"?
- Does the institution have the ability to occupy and hold the chosen position?
- Does the institution have the courage to try to achieve this position?
- Does the institution have the resources to try it?
- How does the location of the institution relate to student markets?
- Are facilities adequate for the position the institution wishes to achieve?
- Is the faculty capable and willing to meet the demands inherent in the chosen institutional position? (Corbitt 1979; Ihlanfeldt 1980).

Mission and Goals

College bulletins and catalogs often carry vague or outdated statements about their mission and goals. Often they speak in idealistic terms that defy

any translation into programmatic thrusts. Many are so nearly identical that they become useless.* The mission/goal statement of an institution should distinguish one institution from another. It should describe a distinctive position that is the result of four steps: (1) determining the institution's image both within and outside the institution, (2) determining options for developing its position, (3) selecting the option that is most likely to bring desired long-term results, and (4) selecting the option that will create the market position the institution wants (Kotler 1976, p. 58).

Whoever drafts the mission/goal statement must have information such as the number of students enrolled in each program, the ratio of faculty to students, the geographic representation of students, the cost per credit hour for the various programs and departments, demographic projections, application rates and their ratio to enrollment, and other pertinent data (Caren and Kemerer 1979).

Part of the mission/goal statement process is to decide where to deploy institutional resources, to recommend changes, and to establish a timetable for assessing the implementation of these changes (Caren and Kemerer 1979). A mission/goal statement is a commitment to a concrete, specific plan with clearly stated priorities. If the mission/goal plan is to work, it must have the backing of the entire campus community. And to acquire this support, the plan must be shared with everyone before it is adopted (Caren and Kemerer 1979). The importance of a mission/goal statement becomes apparent when one realizes that colleges and universities can change their markets by changing their goals (Larkin 1979).

These days, college administrators are looking beyond the 17 to 22 year olds for potential students as part of their long-range planning. The decade of 1980 may see a 20- to 40-percent drop in high school graduates, the source of most incoming freshmen in the past (Lucas 1979, p. 11). About one-half of secondary school graduates age 18 to 24 are attending college, but approximately 3 to 5 percent of the population at large attends college at a given time.

Some institutions are still trying to plan by determining how to satisfy the demands of current students. This strategy will not work, however, because sound marketing requires both short-term and long-term planning to include both out-of-school youth and lifelong learners (Fram 1974–75). This practice is in keeping with modern-day marketing philosophy that focuses attention and activities on clients more than on products (curricula).

The lifelong learners constitute a large potential market for students and have hardly been tapped by higher education (Gaither 1979). Women and part-time students have been tapped partially, resulting in an increase in the median age of students as well as an increase in the percentage of vocational programs (Tatham 1978). However, the potential of these lifelong learners has not been realized.

*One suspects that writers of college bulletins rely heavily upon each other for their copy. One of my students came across the same paragraph in the bulletins of two different schools, and both bulletins contained the same typographical error!

Other markets for new students include nondegree students, transfer students, residents of correctional institutions, older adults, foreign students, and the academically underprepared. (Losak 1973; Cross 1971; Roueche and Kirk 1973). American workers also constitute an enormous potential student market. A miniscule number of eligible workers currently avail themselves of tuition aid plans. Not many institutions have made any serious efforts to penetrate the sizeable worker market (Gaither 1979).

A number of institutions are plunging into nontraditional programs for nontraditional markets with lunch hour programs, evening programs, weekend colleges, and nonresidential programs. One example of how institutions are reaching these new adult markets is a joint program conducted by Indiana University and Purdue University called "Learn & Shop." The program is tailored to the needs of homemakers, retirees, and employed adults and can be completed entirely by attending courses conducted in employee training rooms of department stores at five shopping centers around Indianapolis. Courses are scheduled at various hours of the morning, afternoon, and evening seven days a week and are rotated each semester among the shopping centers (East and McKelvey 1980).

Institutions jumping into the adult market would do well to answer several questions before expanding their potential pool of students: "Will the faculty be able to adjust their teaching to meet the needs of the group?" "Are the academic resources of the college well matched to adult students?" "Can a sufficient number of these students afford the program to justify any needed changes?" (Mudie 1978, p. 21). Some experts caution that only institutions that already possess some competitive advantage—acknowledged quality, low tuition, or cost-effective management—can expect to expand their share of the market (Zemsky and Associates 1980).

Differentiation/Segmentation

In a buyer's market the temptation is to blur distinctions among programs and institutions (Brown 1978). When an institution patterns itself after every other institution the result is potential attrition problems. Colleges and universities are passing up great opportunities to specialize or, at least, to emphasize their distinctive strengths and advantages. No single institution can be everything for everybody (Mudie 1978) but each will have to be everything for some people (Johnson 1978).

Differentiated marketing, or market segmentation, calls for identifying various markets or submarkets and targeting communication to each one. Successful marketing identifies distinct markets and the needs and interests of each segment and uses an appropriate marketing mix to reach each segment. In higher education, student segmentation differentiates potential applicants according to geography and demographics, as well as life style behavior (Spiro 1978; Engel, Fiorillo, and Cayley 1972). Segmentation is a means of using resources more efficiently by focusing on the potential candidates whose interests and characteristics best match the institution.

Segmentation can be *undifferentiated* when the similarities, not the differences, among potential students are considered and an appeal is made

to all students with a complete range of opportunities; *concentrated* when the focus is on only one specific segment; and *differentiated* when two or more segments are selected and distinct recruiting programs are designed for each segment (Spiro 1978).

To conduct an adequate student segmentation analysis, two data bases should be used: primary data bases developed by the institution and secondary data bases developed by independent sources (Spiro 1978).

Colleges and universities must first determine the characteristics of potential students as well as those of actual students to make effective use of segmentation (Bassin 1975). However. it is not sufficient to know the various market segments; it is also necessary to obtain specific information about each segment. For example, the kind of information needed would include: the size of each segment; the needs and interests of persons in each segment; the products or services the institution can provide; when, where, how, and for what purposes these persons want the products and services (Krachenberg 1972) and the benefits they expect (Goodnow n.d.).

Image

There is strong evidence that images and perceptions about an institution influence decisions to enroll in a college (Grunde 1976). Prospective students make decisions and take action on the basis of perceptions (Leslie and Johnson 1974)—the choice of a college is prompted both by a decision to spend four years in a pleasant and rewarding environment and by a decision to seek an education that will lead to a career with economic and social rewards (Litten 1980; Kotler 1976). Yet many institutions continue to stress the aspect of image differentiation that emphasizes athletic fame, campus architecture and accommodations, noted alumni, and the prestige of faculty rather than the aspect of differences in programs (Hugstad 1975). Such institutions are capitalizing on the erroneous attitude held by prospective students that there is a correlation between factors such as the record of athletic teams and academic quality (Leister 1975).

In this regard an institution should measure the attitudes and perceptions of students, potential students, faculty, alumni, and the community regarding its image and compare that image with the image of other competing institutions (Barton and Treadwell 1978). Pacific Lutheran University, for example, compared its image with that of a dozen neighboring institutions on the basis of "intellectual versus practical emphasis based on perceived dissimilarities among institutions." It found it had an image of high quality and high cost and chose to use this image for its positioning in its promotion and advertising rather than change the institutional functioning (Larkin 1979).

Individuals' perceptions about an institution may not be accurate, yet it is to this image that people respond. This image is "the sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that a person has of an object" (Kotler 1975, p. 131). An institution needs to know what image it projects, how it is perceived, and what kind of reputation it has (Coppock n.d.). If an institution contrasts the image it tries to project with the way it actually is perceived by potential

students and high school counselors and finds a discrepancy, it ought to reconcile these images to enhance its position (Caren and Kemerer 1979).

The experiences of Pacific Lutheran University and Carleton College provide a handy iist for image assessment: location of the institution and proximity to the student's home, size, quality, cost, social enviroment, and program offerings (Sullivan and Litten 1976; Larkin 1979).

Many of the difficulties institutions of higher education experience are attributable to their tenacious maintenance of the idea of "what it is, what it does, and who (what market) it serves" (Krachenberg 1972, p. 374). Institutions suffer from inertia when it comes to changing their image (Leister 1975) but they must be ready to accommodate the market's needs. "It is no longer possible to say, 'Here we are, like it or not.' It's time to say, 'This is what we are, if that is what you want we're the best' " (Knaus 1979, p. 11). It is apparent that colleges and universities need to be involved in institutional research as well as in market research. Successful marketing depends upon a solid base of objective research, not on whims, hunches, guesses, fuzzy estimates, traditions, and politics (Barton and Treadwell 1978).

Institutional research and marketing research are so intimately connected that they are inseparable. Specifically, market research covers all those elements that directly or indirectly affect attracting students and graduating them. It includes identification and location of target markets, definition of an institution's consumers, the extent of demand for programs and courses by various market segments, seasonal patterns of enrollment, the effect of competition on both the institution and the student, institutional image, consumer satisfaction, and promotional effectiveness (Allen 1978; Thompson 1978; Mowen 1977).

Data for marketing research can be generated from four sources:

Internal records including enrollments, retention rates, dropouts, financial aid inquiries, applications, and demographics about students and alumni.

Secondary sources such as census records, Department of Education statistics, statewide studies, and the publications of other colleges and universities.

Empirical studies the institution conducts on aspects such as the image, market segments, motivation of applicants and enrollees, student and alumni satisfaction, and promotional effectiveness.

Management science applications using data obtained in the first three categories to do forecasting and simulations (Allen 1978, p. 7).

In addition to data needed to formulate a market position, an institution's market research calls for answers to questions such as:

- Why are current students attending this institution?
- Why do the students continue at this institution?
- What are prospective students looking for?
- Why do some admitted students not enroll?

- Why do students withdraw from this institution?
- Is the institution ignoring possible new markets? (Johnson 1978, p. 13)

Previously, institutions generally used several traditional, simple approaches to market research such as demographic profiles, postal zip code areas, telephone prefix trunklines, and enrollment categorization by curriculum. Limiting market research to these approaches is no longer adequate; more sophisticated methods and techniques need to be used, particularly in rating applicants in order to forecast market trends and enrollments (Leister 1975). Some of the more sophisticated research studies, especially those dealing with attitudes, include multidimensional scaling and multidimensional unfolding (Green and Rao 1972).

A wealth of admissions data is available to colleges and universities from The College Board. The Admissions Testing Program data give the SAT scores and the institutions designated by an applicant to receive the scores. The Student Descriptive Questionnaire gives the applicant's academic and socioeconomic history as well as his or her goals. The Student Search Service data provide names of applicants having characteristics specified by an institution (Zemsky and Associates 1980). The American Council on Education prepares factbooks on demographic data, such as potential student populations, tuition costs, and faculty salaries (Ihlanfeldt 1980).

The Higher Education Finance Research Institute, in cooperation with The College Board, has developed a systems model for enrollment planning that will enable institutions to compare the extent of academic programs with regional projections of potential enrollments. The system provides details about the student market as well as the institution's position within a regional admissions market. It makes projections for each of the country's 200 regional admissions markets regarding the likely market size and structure for a six-year period, together with each institution's share of the market, and supplies a model institutions can use to test the feasibility and the financial risks of various enrollment plans. (Zemsky and Associates 1980).

Students' Viewpoint

In any market, but surely in a buyer's market, colleges and universities must be student oriented. However, many institutions have had a problem establishing and maintaining this focus (Fram 1971). The focus of marketing must be primarily on the goals of the students the institution serves and not simply on institutional self-interest (Hoy 1980).

Marketing includes assessing the needs and desires of potential clients with regard to programs, courses, services, tuition/costs, and location. Too often, decisions about these matters are made almost entirely on what administrators and faculties want rather than what students may need (Allen 1978). "In the higher education environment, a marketing approach can help the college or institution to focus on the customers and to make realistic assessments of what they are and where they are going because, if the customers don't buy, the institution will die" (Fram 1971, p. 15).

However, higher education cannot rely solely upon what customers are seeking; such a posture would vitiate the intellectual tradition of colleges and universities. Although obtaining information from potential students and other constituencies is fundamental to the survival of an institution, it is not true that "the customer is always right" or that "the customer always knows what he wants." Institutions must develop programs consistent with their missions instead of programs designed merely to meet the fleeting interests of potential students (Ihlanfeldt 1980). That is why colleges and universities must be product oriented as well as student oriented (Litten 1980). In the current buyer's market, students rather than institutions, are beginning to dictate, thereby challenging the integrity of programs (Jenkins 1974).

It can be very helpful for institutions to know how students select a school and what factors are the best predictors of where a student will go. The process through which a prospect becomes an enrolled student is more complex than one may suspect at first glance. In some instances, as case histories indicate, the final decision of a college choice may not be reached for many months, perhaps at the last possible moment before final enrollment deadlines.

The geometric image of a funnel has been used as an analogy for the process a prospective student follows in matriculating at an institution. The admission funnel traces the 18-month planning-decision process the prospective student follows in narrowing a long list of possible college choices to one institution. Generally, the student looks at prospective institutions from the spring of the 11th grade through the fall of the 12th grade, sends in applications from the fall through the winter of 12th grade, and makes a final choice of a college starting sometime from the spring of 12th grade (Turner 1978).

Gilmour, Spiro, and Dolich (n.d.) have identified six phases a prospective student goes through in selecting a college: (1) making the decision to attend college, (2) developing a list of colleges, (3) deciding where to apply, (4) completing the applications, (5) receiving acceptance(s), and (6) making the final college choice (p. 8).

The decision to attend college is a long-term process that probably starts in elementary school and continues through grade 11. This decision is closely connected with a choice of a vocation as well as the type of high school program selected. Many parents make the decision of whether or not their children are going to college and then set boundaries regarding cost, location, quality of the institution, and its programs. In general, students seem to begin each phase of the selection process earlier if their parents are college-educated and if they received high scores on the SAT (Gilmour, Spiro, and Dolich n.d.).

Developing a college list is generally prompted by taking College Board examinations in grade 11. The initial "college awareness" set includes local colleges; those with national reputations; and those that parents, relatives, friends, and neighbors have attended. The "expanded college awareness set" evolves as the student actively seeks information about colleges (Kotler

1976). During the application decision process the student narrows the choices down to between three and six colleges. Two-thirds of the students decide where they will apply during the fall of 12th grade. Students whose parents attended college seem to apply to more institutions and are less interested in cost factors than students whose parents did not attend college (Gilmour, Spiro, and Dolich n.d.).

Most students wait until they have heard from all the institutions in which they had genuine interest, probably during the winter or spring of their senior year before making their final choice. Three quarters of the students receive acceptance to one or two institutions. Most make the final choice without information on the financial aid they would get. Those students who are accepted to more than one school choose the school they think offers highest quality programs for the money (Gilmour, Spiro, and Dolich n.d.).

In reaching a decision on the college of first choice, a student follows three types of logic. The first is the "Dominance Model," where a student chooses a college that overshadows all the other schools on all standards; second, is the "Conjunctive Model," where a student chooses a college that meets the minimum level for each standard; and third, the "Expectancy-Value Model," where the student chooses the college that has the highest weighted score. The last model is compensatory in nature inasmuch as there is a balancing of strong elements against deficient ones on the standard (Kotler 1976).

Kotler (1976) identifies four categories of sources students use to obtain information about colleges: (1) personal sources such as friends, parents, teachers, and counselors; (2) public sources such as the mass media, printed guides, and college selection advisory agencies; (3) commercial sources such as catalogs, direct mail, and displays; and (4) experiential sources such as on-campus visits.

A study at the University of Tennessee at Martin shows that family, friends, and former students had the greatest influence on the decision to attend (Gorman 1976). Parents seem to be "one of the most pervasive people influences on prospective students" (Maguire 1977).

Generally speaking, most high school graduates going to college will have to make a choice of a college only once, and that choice is the result of two concomitant decisions: one, to select a rewarding environment for four years, and two, to select an education that will ultimately result in a career and the rewards accompanying a specific degree (Litten 1980).

There are academic and nonacademic characteristics or factors that play an important role in decisions students make to enroll in college. Academic characteristics include standardized test scores, high school records, and choice of a major and courses. Nonacademic factors include: geographic location, type and size of high school, economic status of family, educational background of parents, financial aid, institution's competition, and national profile of the institution (Mudie 1978).

A Boston College study using discriminant analysis found seven factors related to choice of a college: financial aid, parents' preference, specific

academic programs, size of school, location of campus, athletic facilities, and social activities (Lay and Maguire 1980).

A number of studies have identified varied factors that contribute to the student's choice of a college, including (in alphabetical order):

- Athletic facilities (Lay and Maguire 1980)
- Academic reputation of the institution (Ihlanfeldt 1980; Gorman 1976; Brown 1978; Mudie 1978)
- College faculty (Turner 1978; Gorman 1976)
- Economic status of family (Mudie 1978; Ihlanfeldt 1980; Leslie and Johnson 1974)
- Financial aid (Lay and Maguire 1980; Mudie 1978; Gorman 1976)
- Former students (Gorman 1976)
- Geographic location (Mudie 1978; Ihlanfeldt 1980; Leslie and Johnson 1974; Lucas 1980; Gorman 1976)
- High school teachers and counselors (Gorman 1976; Luciano 1978)
- Effectiveness of the institution in getting jobs for its graduates (Brown 1978)
- Institution's competition (Mudie 1978)
- Interviews (Ihlanfeldt 1975)
- Older brothers and sisters who attended college (Ihlanfeldt 1980)
- Parents and family preference (Lay and Maguire 1980; Leslie and Johnson 1974; Ihlanfeldt 1980; Gorman 1976; Maguire 1977)
- Physical plant and facilities (Gorman 1976)
- Recruiters (Gorman 1976)
- Size of school (Lay and Maguire 1980)
- Social activities (Lay and Maguire 1980)
- Specific academic programs (Lay and Maguire 1980; Brown 1978)
- Visits to campus (Gorman 1976; Turner 1978; Campbell 1971; Ihlanfeldt 1975)

Geography—location and proximity of a college to one's home—seems to be a primary factor influencing choice of a college (Lucas 1980; Gorman 1976). As many as seven out of ten enrollees in private institutions live within 500 miles of the institution (Ihlanfeldt 1980, p. 51).

Although there is no agreement on what factors are the most important in choosing a college, individual schools can ascertain for themselves which factors apply particularly to them. An example of research conducted at one institution with possible implications for other institutions is Goodnow's (n.d.) survey of students' orientations toward participation conducted at Millikin University.

A study at Carnegie-Mellon University sought to find the reasons why prospects who had made inquiries did not apply. They found that distance from home and cost were the two principal reasons, followed closely by location, lack of desired programs, and the school's facilities (Baker and Meganathan 1979, p. 3).

It is apparent that an institution must pay close attention to the control-

able factors influencing a student's decision to enroll in that institution. Kotler (1976) suggests that an institution pursue four broad categories for influencing the choice a student makes: (1) programs to influence the inclusion or exclusion of specific criteria as factors in choosing a college; (2) programs to influence the perceived relative importance of different criteria in choosing a college; (3) programs to influence the beliefs commonly held about a particular criterion; (4) programs to influence students to prefer one type of logic to another in arriving at their decision on a college (pp. 70–71).

Saunders and Lancaster (n.d.) found through cluster analysis that student-benefit segments could be identified based on student attitudes towards higher education. They used 12 student attitudes to arrive at the following four clusters.

1. Familiar-interest oriented. These students choose courses that appear interesting and stimulating to them by looking at subjects in which they already have an interest. They seek short-term gains without much thought for long-term implications.
2. Escapists. These students tend to have negative attitudes and are going to college to delay making up their minds about a career and to "get away from home." They, too, seek short-term gains rather than long-term gains.
3. Career oriented. These students are seeking help with their career interests by taking courses of value and interest. College is seen as a means to that end and therefore, long-term goals predominate.
4. Security oriented. These students are seeking future career security but they are not particularly interested in or stimulated by their courses. These students also see college as a means to an end—a necessary evil. (pp. 8–10).

Prospective students, faced with numerous career opportunities, may pursue one of them at a college if "persuaded" to do so depending upon five characteristics:

1. "Perceived relative advantage" or "benefit" to be gained from a course seems a likely key variable.
2. "Perceived compatability" of a course with the individual's ideas and current beliefs is likely to be important.
3. "Perceived complexity" refers to the perceived need for new knowledge and activities to be associated with an innovation. A career opportunity outside the normal "career aid" given by a school could be seen to have complexity and, therefore, be less likely to be adopted.
4. "Trialability" relates to the possibility of trying an alternative before commitment. This is not easy with careers, but it is likely that many students will feel they have "tried" education or particularly some subjects that are taught at degree level. They think they know what higher education is "about"—however wrong they may be.

5. "Observability" refers to the visibility of an opportunity. The more conspicuous an opportuity, the greater is the likelihood that it will be selected (Saunders and Lancaster n.d., pp. 4-5).

Recruitment

It is not uncommon for some institutions to spend more than $1,000 to enroll one student (Ihlanfeldt 1980, p. 1). The high degree of competition among institutions for the same pool of qualified students gives rise to counter-advertising and higher costs, not always justified. The end result of such "recruiting wars" is a compromise in requirements and of program quality without solving the basic problems (McAdams 1975; Hoy 1980; Lay and Maguire 1980). The fever pitch of some institutions regarding recruitment, although understandable from their viewpoint of survival, does not make much sense when one considers the total picture. A story repeated often on the dubiousness of some recruitment efforts is reported by Hoy (1980):

> *At a management institute sponsored by the New England Board of Higher Education and the New England Regional Office of the College Board, Michael S. McPherson, Williams College economist, raised some warning signals about the penchant for marketing in recruitment and admissions. "When everybody decides to spend more on marketing," he said, "it's a little bit like everybody showing up two hours early to get a good seat at the big game. Showing up early doesn't create any more seats. What happens is that you wind up with everybody sitting two extra hours waiting for the game to start in the same seat that they would have had anyway." McPherson acknowledges that it is entirely legitimate to do a better job of informing prospective students about the processes of higher education. But he worries about the expenditure of valuable and scarce resources by institutions that, in his words, "will ultimately cancel each other out" (p. 3).*

Fighting to win a larger share of the market may seem like an expedient way for an institution to survive, but it may not be to the best interest of an institution to try to win more applicants who have also applied to institutions somewhat less attractive. It may result in an excessively high cost/benefit ratio (Lay and Maguire 1980).

In recruitment, it helps to consider each of the three basic markets in higher education—the primary market, the secondary market, and the test market. The primary market covers the applicants who are likely to enroll if admitted. They have similar profiles to those in the past who indicated the institution as their first choice. Generally, they live within 200 to 500 miles of the institution. The secondary market includes the candidates who probably will be accepted, but are more likely to enroll in another school. The test market represents the candidates who apply at the behest of alumni or institutional representatives, but who otherwise would not have considered the institution as a first or second choice (Ihlanfeldt 1975).

Realistically, the best market to pursue in recruiting is the primary market. Certainly from a cost/benefit position, this market will yield the best results. There is a diminishing return ratio in the secondary and test markets; that is, an institution would have to multiply the number of prospects by a large factor when addressing secondary and test markets in order to obtain an enrollee as compared with the primary market.

Forecasting Enrollments

A major part of marketing is forecasting enrollments. Although enrollment forecasts and projections are difficult and tenuous, an institution must have a reasonably accurate estimate of how many students will enroll in order to accurately plan budgets, faculty, programs, and facilities.

A simplistic enrollment forecasting based on demographic factors alone is giving way to more sophisticated and comprehensive models. Such models must consider the effects of any changes of curriculum and services offered to students as well as an estimate of an institution's share in the market as a function of its competitive characteristics (Fitz-Roy 1976). Dembowski (1980) has developed a student choice prediction model that has three principal vectors: personal characteristics of a student, the components a student experienced in the admissions process, and the average scores of the characteristics of a student's other college choices (pp. 111-12). The student choice model is Ei = f (Si, Pi, Ci) + u, when E = the probability of student entering an institution; S = a vector (or set) of student characteristics; P = a vector of an institution's admissions process components student i experienced; C = a vector of the average scores of the characteristics of the other college choices of student i; and u = an error term.

In using this model the following pieces might be included under each of the components: S—place of residence, gender, SAT scores, SES; P—participation in a campus open house and an interview with a faculty member; C—average of characteristics for all the other institutions to which the individual applied for admission; U—statistical measure such as the maximum likelihood estimate coefficient and standard error might be used in the analysis, together with other appropriate statistical measures (Dembowski 1980, pp. 105-109).

The likelihood that a student will enroll at a given college is diminished as the student applies to an increasing number of institutions. Using the student choice model will give an estimated probability of an individual entering an institution and will define the effect of the various characteristics on the student's college choice decision. Its use can provide more control over the quality as well as the quantity of entering freshmen (Dembowski 1980).

As the recruitment process proceeds from prospects to candidates to applicants to enrollees an institution should have a good idea of the number of individuals in each pool. Every institution needs to know the proportion for translating the number of prospects into actual enrollees. A general norm might be one freshman enrollee resulting from every 15 prospects, but much will depend on whether the prospects are from the primary or secondary market as well as on the prestige of the institution (Ihlanfeldt 1975). An institution can work backwards to determine how many prospects it needs. For example, if an institution's goal is 50 freshmen and its past records show that the average freshman class has been 40, the institution would have to increase the prospect pool proportionately.

Recruitment Contacts

In their recruitment efforts institutional administrators should be aware of

the effectiveness of various contacts and individuals. Current, satisfied students are effective recruiters when they speak with high school seniors during on-campus visits, and prospective students prefer them as a source for qualitative information about an institution, such as its teaching reputation or the ability of its faculty (Litten 1980).

Alumni, if they are trained, can be a great recruitment aid across the country when working with parents and high school personnel, but they are not as effective when dealing directly with prospects (Ihlanfeldt 1975). The strength of alumni is in their close proximity to prospects and in their pride in their alma mater.

College staff, such as admissions personnel, and outside recruiters often do a poor job in recruitment because they are not knowledgeable about the programs and services of the institution (Fischer 1978). The role of high school counselors has changed in recent years and consequently they have become less influential in students' choices of a college. Counselors serve as resources to students who request college brochures and catalogs; they rarely suggest specific colleges for students' consideration (Mudie 1978; Ihlanfeldt 1975). Mudie (1978) suggests four strategies that may help in using high school counselors in recruitment: (1) carefully select the high school to be visited, (2) sponsor a luncheon for counselors from the schools from which the college is seeking candidates, (3) invite counselors to visit the campus for a low-key information program, and (4) send brief, well-written newsletters to counselors. High school teachers, if contacted by a faculty member in their academic area, are generally more effective as recruiters than are high school counselors.

Parents are college "recruiters" in the sense that they have an influence upon their children's choice of a school. It is critical to provide the appropriate information to parents. The principal areas of concern among parents evaluating colleges for their children were ranked in the following order: financial, fields of study offered, teaching reputation or ability of faculty, academic standards/general quality, careers to which college might lead, general academic reputation, and social atmosphere (Litten 1980, p. 4).

Generally, one or two media were favored for seeking information on each type of concern. The preferred medium for financial information was the college admissions office, followed by college publications; for fields of study offered, it was college publications followed by college admissions officers; for teaching reputation or ability of faculty, it was college alumni followed by current students; academic standards/general quality was sought through the college faculty followed by high school counselors; for careers to which college might lead, it was college alumni followed by college admissions officers; for general academic reputation, it was high school counselors followed by college alumni and commercial guidebooks; and for social atmosphere, it was overwhelmingly current students followed by college alumni (Litten 1980, p. 4)

There are some linkages between the kind of information sought and the medium used to obtain it. Impersonal information media, such as college publications, are generally preferred for factual, impersonal information

including fields of study offered. College admissions officers are preferred for factual personal information such as financial information or career information. Sources other than the college, such as high school counselors, are preferred for general qualitative information such as academic reputation. For qualitative information such as teaching reputation or ability of faculty, current students and alumni are preferred. Official college promotional resources, such as admissions officers and publications, are considered a less effective source of information about the quality or reputation of a college (Litten 1980).

Retention

All institutions are vitally concerned with recruitment, but not all are as serious in their efforts to retain existing students. There is an expected attrition in higher education; not everyone who enrolls in college will graduate from the same institution. The average national dropout rate is around 25 percent of entering freshmen (Maguire 1977, p. 19). Still, retention is a critical aspect of marketing because satisfied students who return constitute the major portion of college enrollments (Larkin 1979).

If it is true that "delivery is the key to college impact on the student return rate" (Larkin 1979, p. 22), then knowing where an institution has failed in the delivery may help in the efforts to increase retention rates. A small percentage of students leave through academic dismissal, but most leave voluntarily. They withdraw because they are dissatisfied with some aspect of the institution or because they feel there was a violation of "truth in advertising." Among the reasons students leave are finances, change in major, career shifts, family relocation, desire for geographic diversity, and poor grades.

About one fourth of withdrawing students are dissatisfied for the wrong reasons, for example, "administrative roadblocks." Others should not have come to the institution in the first place either because they lacked motivation or because they and the institution were not suitable for each other (Maguire 1977, p. 20). Student retention depends, to some extent, upon accurate information disseminated by the institution about itself and its programs and services. In addition the kind of counseling and advice that directs new students into programs and courses geared to their capabilities and interests also affects retention (Fischer 1978).

If an institution has a high attrition rate it should try to improve its program quality and to offer students better services (Ihlanfeldt 1975). Surveys and exit interviews might yield important information for everyone at the institution from recruiters up the line through the administration. Monitoring withdrawals is imperative for effective recruitment.

Communications

Too often institutions think only of promotion and advertising when they approach marketing and forget that these two elements fit into a broader dimension of communication. Marketing is a communications process because it involves interaction among people (Fram 1974). Many erroneously view marketing as a narrow, one-way process from the institution to the customer. However, the best marketing approach provides two-way communications between the institution and various constituencies. Magill (1974) could have been addressing the broader issue of marketing when he said that "admissions is the eyes and ears of the college and a voice to the world outside" (p. 16).

Market analysis or needs assessment requires an institution to seek out and listen to its constituencies. In fact, effective marketing begins with internal communications starting at the top of the administration. Without such internal communications it will be impossible for the institution to carry out an organized and effective external communications effort (Ivens 1979). Internal communications is an absolute requisite if an institution will take seriously the admonition made earlier regarding positioning. A cooperative effort is needed to determine a market position, and such an effort depends upon internal communications.

Once an institution has created an efficient internal communications process, it is ready to engage in external communications. External communications takes place, broadly speaking, through personal and nonpersonal approaches. Personal communication, seen more as a function of selling, includes direct contacts with prospective students by faculty and staff visits to secondary schools and by talking to prospects at college fairs. Nonpersonal communication, more in the mode of advertising, is carried out through catalogs, brochures, flyers, advertisements, and direct mail letters (Krachberg 1972). Institutions rarely distinguished their external communications between disseminating information and persuasion (Hugstad 1975).

Understandably, most communications efforts revolve around admissions, where the ultimate goal is to enroll and maintain students. Initially, admissions communications concern attitudes held by prospects that will lead to certain behavior. Mancuso (1975) has adapted the "advertising staircase" model to college marketing. In this process, the student's interest in a college progresses through six steps, the first three affecting only attitude, and the second three affecting behavior. Progressively fewer students: (1) are aware of the college, (2) are interested in the college, (3) are familiar with the college, (4) attend limited offerings of the college, (5) attend the college, and (6) recommend the college to others.

These steps can be fleshed out with the following objectives, each of which should have at least one form of communication to the prospects.

1. Establish awareness of the existence of the college.
2. Create inquisitiveness about the nature of the college.
3. Build interest to a peak.
4. Stimulate the prospect to act.

5. Obtain prospect's commitment.
6. Sustain that commitment.
7. Provide precollege orientation ("Guildelines to Creating an Admissions Communications Program" 1972, p. 12).

Fitting these objectives or stages into the time frame of the admissions funnel can serve as a guide for a promotional admissions schedule: (1) developing prospects from the spring of 11th grade through fall of 12th grade, (2) developing applicants from the fall of 12th grade through the winter of 12th grade, and (3) developing matriculants from the spring of 12th grade to the fall of freshman year and enrollment in the college (Turner 1978).

In converting prospects into applicants the communication tactics generally stress strengthening ties between the prospect and the school. Some of the activities include letters, newsletters, and other informational mailings; contacts by phone or letter from faculty or alumni; and meetings of groups of prospects close to their homes (Turner 1978).

There are numerous techniques available to an institution to promote its programs; since there is no one right way, each institution must develop its own tactics in accordance with its position. Typically, many institutions use several of the traditional marketing strategies to recruit high school graduates including: college days; parents' nights; open houses; providing academic services to high schools such as films, books, faculty appearances, and computer programs; posters, billboards, advertisements; direct mail; public service announcements; and personal contacts by alumni.

All techniques and approaches used in admissions marketing must be honest and of high quality. It is better to opt for quality over quantity; anything less than quality and honesty may be counterproductive. Too many promotional activities have been in poor taste and some have even bordered on being unethical. Some of those considered blatant excesseses include:

- A college catering to women used a brochure that "shows a girl with long blond hair lying in a field of flowers and holding one gently in her hand while staring wistfully into the camera's eye. 'Especially for Women,' reads the italic caption underneath, 'because women are creative, intelligent, and beautiful, resourceful and sweet and generally different from men' " (Fiske 1980, p. 95).
- A university had an advertising sign pulled by an airplane over a summer resort (Larson 1980).
- An institution sponsors a television quiz show for high school students with scholarships for prizes.
- Some schools offer no-need scholarships to lure the scholastically able students.
- Some institutions run bus trips to campus or stage song fests, magic shows, and juggling acts in shopping centers (Fiske 1980, p. 94).
- Other institutions have resorted to giving away promotional frisbees,

sending high school seniors letters of "acceptance" even before they have applied for admission, and giving students cash rebates for each new student they recruited for the college (Kotler 1976, p. 55).

A Boston College experiment in marketing showed that the traditional techniques with the backing of dedicated faculty, alumni, and students, usually get better results than the more expensive "gimmicky" techniques (Maguire 1977, p. 17). In addition, the bizarre gimmicks may give the impression that the school is desperate for enrollments (Caren and Kemerer 1979).

More important than asking *which* techniques ought to be used in promotion for recruitment are "the questions of *why, when, by whom,* and *how well*" (Barton and Treadwell 1978, p. 82).

Most institutions use publicity and advertising to promote their programs and institutions. Publicity and advertising can reinforce each other, but only if there is a concerted effort to coordinate planning. Every institution can receive publicity in the press and broadcast media for many of its programs and services. In addition, an institution might arrange special events and activities of a social, cultural, or public nature as a basis for publicity (Larkin 1979). For example, an institution may sponsor an art exhibit open to the general public and then use the newspaper publicity of the event to advertise its art program. Some colleges have reprinted actual newspaper reviews for distribution as flyers for advertising purposes.

Advertising can be a good vehicle to inform potential students if it is tailored to specific markets. Effective advertising stems from a research base of students' interests, perceptions, and decision processes they use in choosing schools, together with the way the communications and advertising media affect that decision process (Kotler 1976).

One area of advertising, direct mail, has taken on new proportions with the commercial availability of lists of high school seniors broken down by every conceivable factor. The result is a "blitz" of the better high school seniors by colleges and universities. One girl with extremely high Scholastic Aptitude Test scores received nearly 400 pieces of mail from 150 schools, and another girl, fifth in her class, received about four shopping bags full of promotional material (Larson 1980). These cases are not unusual. Receiving letters and brochures from 200 colleges is par for students with strong academic records.

Although many students may be flattered by such attention, they begin to wonder what is going on. Stephen K. Bailey, professor of education at Harvard University and president of the National Academy of Education, wonders whether this kind of overkill may not have disastrous repercussions: "If you receive a hundred fancy colored brochures, it has to make you a little bit cynical and ask the question, 'If they have to push the product so hard, there must be something wrong with it' " (Feinberg 1981, p. 3.).

Pricing

Some individuals in higher education believe that pricing is the most important decision today in a recruitment marketing plan (Huddleston and Batty

1978). This is not surprising in the light of current economic conditions, especially if predictions of escalating costs and inflation continue. All institutions, including heavily endowed independent universities, are wrestling with the issue of pricing.

For a long time institutions have backed into their tuition rates and fee structures, figuring out how much income was necessary to keep the institution going and then prorating the cost to expected enrollment. Today, institutions worry about the effect tuition rates will have on enrollments (Huddleston and Batty 1978; Ihlanfeldt 1980). To arrive at a pricing policy, Ihlanfeldt (1980) suggests a consideration of three factors: "(1) the effects of a given pricing policy on the nature and mission of the institution, (2) the effects of a given pricing policy on enrollment, and (3) the degree to which a particular pricing policy may unnecessarily encourage acceleration and therefore decrease revenue" (p. 115).

Thompson (1978) places the issue of tuition pricing into the framework of economic theory, relating demand, tuition, and institution costs.

> *When talking about demand, economists make a useful distinction betweeen movements along a demand schedule and shifts in demand schedules resulting from changes in underlying demographic forces and consumer tastes. The demand schedule is a function of all the attributes of a product or service including the price. Usually, the product is held constant and the demand schedule is drawn to show the price of the product... the quantity saleable at this price. However, it is quite proper to hold price constant and draw the demand schedule to show the relationship between the quality of the product and the quantity saleable at that quality. Given this distinction it is possible to put forward two propositions about institutional cost. First, holding constant the quality of services provided per student and the terms upon which these services are provided (i.e., admissions standards, tuition, etc.), if student demand schedules shift outward, marginal costs will decrease as enrollment increases... This proposition follows from the observation that, by spreading variable overheads and by more fully exploiting specialization, the division of labor, and opportunities for factor substitution, an institution can provide the same set of educational services to increasing numbers of students at a decreasing cost. Second, holding students' demand schedules constant, enrollment can only be increased by reducing the cost or increasing the benefit to the student of enrolling in college. Here, the law of diminishing returns should apply. Consequently, we would propose that, holding student demand schedules constant, an institution's marginal cost increases as enrollment is increased... This proposition follows from the observation that an institution can increase enrollments by effecting more course titles or degree programs, better training, more stimulating interaction in the classroom or class laboratory, smaller class-size, more times and locations at which courses and degree programs are offered, or better counseling to assist the student in matching his or her interests to the offerings of the institution. These*

additional services usually cost money and, other things being equal, it can be concluded that an institution can increase enrollment only at an increased cost per student. (pp. F-1 and F-2)

Too many institutions persist in a too rigid pricing policy, charging the same tuition for freshmen and seniors, and the same for majors in education, psychology, management, biology, art, and theology, although the costs for each are different (Fram 1971).

In the past, the cost of attending college was an important factor for many students; now, with cutbacks in federal aid and loans, it will be an even more critical factor. If students see the same value in attending any one of several institutions, they will more likely apply and attend the one with the lowest price. The major implication will be in the choice of publicly supported institutions with relatively low tuition in preference to independent institutions with high costs.

Another way students may approach choice of a college relative to price may be to identify schools within a selected affordable price range and then choose one of the schools within that range based on quality or some other perceived desirable attribute. "Thus, while intense brand preference exists for certain colleges, consumers do not pay vast differences in price to support preferred brands within certain broad categories (Mancuso 1975, p. 43). It may be advisable for an institution to promote a program for what it can do for the student, not for its low cost (Coppock n.d.).

There are several pricing models colleges and universities might consider:

Stratified pricing. Under a system of stratified pricing, tuition is based on a student's major, reflecting a better proportion of the institutional costs associated with the program. A music major, for example, requiring tutorials with a faculty person, would pay more than a theology major. Such pricing would adversely affect the higher priced programs and would force institutions to examine the worth of the programs to society relative to their costs (Fram 1971).

Scaled pricing. This approach would require the student to pay higher tuition for the first course with decreased tuition for additional courses up to what would be considered a normal load. The student would be charged a substantial surcharge for any course beyond the normal load. This kind of policy controls acceleration by students.

Two-part pricing. This strategy divides the cost of fixed overhead, which is prorated among all the students, from the cost for each course. The fixed noninstructional costs can also be varied for majors to reflect differences in overhead costs associated with particular programs.

Semester pricing. Under this plan a student would pay a flat fee for each semester regardless of the number of courses taken. The student would still "be expected to pay for four full years of education unless credit was allowed for advanced placement, for foreign or summer study, or for work done by transfer students" (Ihlanfeldt 1980, p. 119). Under this plan students normally could be expected to take more courses than under a per-credit hour plan (Lucas 1980).

Unit pricing. In this system a student pays on a per course basis regardless of the number of courses taken during a semester. This system favors part-time students who would not have to pay a fixed semester rate if they were taking only one or two courses.

Variable pricing. This system allows flexibility in the tuition depending on whether a student is full-time or part-time or whether the course is given during the day or at night, on-campus or off-campus.

In the final analysis, the students will decide whether the price is right by either accepting or rejecting it.

To develop a price structure, Ihlanfeldt (1980) suggests that an institution ought to consider the following:

1. Is the tuition sufficient to maintain or improve the quality of offerings?
2. Is the tuition reasonable enough to preserve or increase the present market?
3. Are tuition costs equitable for all students so that one group is not subsidizing substantially other groups of students?
4. "Is the price charged maximizing income from price supports available through government student aid without reducing the size of the potential market?" (p. 101).

Ihlanfeldt (1980) summarizes Marquand's objectives in a pricing system:

1. Course programming should be maximally flexible.
2. There should be no price disincentives to discourage students from taking additional courses to enhance their education.
3. Financial pressure on students to graduate earlier than they wish should be minimal.
4. There should be an effort to minimize the financial distribution between scholarship and nonscholarship students...
5. Subsidization by nonaccelerating students of those students who have chosen to accelerate should be minimal...
6. Management should seek simplicity, ease, and low cost of administration to save overhead costs for educational purposes.
7. All students who are registered should have equal access to all facilities at all times.
8. There should be a sense of stability and predictability in tuition income to facilitate budgetary planning.
9. A policy should exist that avoids placing either the institution or the student in a position of having to decide educational or pedagogical issues solely, or even primarily, on the basis of pricing questions. (pp. 116–17)

Financial Aid

Financial aid for students is fast becoming a serious problem for most institutions of higher education. Rising tuition costs and cutbacks in federel loans are making it impossible for growing numbers of students to afford

the cost of a college education. The greater the economic crunch the greater the need for institutions to inform prospective students about all the costs involved as well as available financial aid.

Financial aid information contained in promotional materials should be tested with students before publication. The information should be based on five criteria: Is it factual in every detail? Does it describe the proper sequence a student must follow to obtain aid? Is it identified with a specific time period? Is it complete and accurate? Are the facts arranged according to their importance and significance? (College Entrance Examination Board 1976, p. 15).

There are four main ways to package financial aid are:

1. Self-help *percentage* where a percentage of need is met by a student and the rest by a gift aid.
2. Self-help *fixed* where the student gets a fixed amount through a loan and/or job aid.
3. Self-help *variance* where the amount of aid is determined by a student's attributes, such as ability, record, and major.
4. Self-help *restrictive* where freshmen are excluded from such aid (Huddleston and Batty 1978, p. 46).

Market Audit

Any serious efforts at marketing in higher education call for a marketing audit—an evaluation process that looks at both the total marketing plan and each component within it. The evaluation ought to include such elements as faculty and curriculum, the recruitment through enrollment process, follow-up studies of alumni, effectiveness of specific marketing strategies and techniques used, and ethical implications (Lucas 1979; 1980).

Eckert (1979) makes a telling observation regarding marketing audits in the following statement:

> *Paradoxically, while the college evaluates the success of a marketing process, the college has already been evaluated by that process. Obviously, whether an enrollment increase was achieved is the first consideration in the evaluation of marketing. But equally important is the value of change and improvement which was achieved by the college in its search to provide meaningful educational opportunities to its public. To evaluate only in terms of enrollment would be irresponsible to the students attracted by the process (p. 7).*

Keeping accurate records of every aspect of marketing together with the results of marketing audits will give an institution a better idea of its market position so that it can *act* more than *react* to needed changes. Disseminating such information as widely as is feasible within an institution will serve to inform everyone of the marketing effort; develop a better understanding of the resources and activities in the institution; envelop the staff, faculty, and students in the marketing process; and help coordinate the efforts of the institution (Turner 1978).

Conclusions and Recommendations

Higher education seems to face an uncertain future, at least for the remainder of this century. A declining college-age population, higher costs, inflation, and a diminution in the perception of the worth of a college degree are proving troublesome for colleges and universities. Many colleges are becoming more inclusive, more expansive, and are cooperating more with other colleges; they are serving broader markets, going beyond the campus to reach new markets, and forming consortia in dealing with student markets. All institutions should reexamine their programs and courses, the current markets they serve, new potential markets, promotional practices, and costs. They need to engage in systematic research, looking at themselves both academically and administratively.

Organizationally, everyone at a college or university, from the president down to students, should be involved in marketing. One individual, reporting directly to the president, should be responsible for coordinating all marketing efforts, including admissions and recruiting staffs. The institution should have a single institutional strategy based on its mission, goals, image, and position. Any subunits such as schools, divisions, departments, or programs must fit into the overall institutional thrust. In any event, an effective student-oriented institution involves a deep and thorough understanding and implementation of human organization as well as leadership (Levitt 1975).

Marketing involves risks and there are no simple "cookie cutter" answers (Barton and Treadwell 1978, p. 83). Going from seller's market to a buyer's market demands that colleges and universities use marketing in a more businesslike management fashion. It means that they must look at improving faculty development and productivity, at more economical use of physical facilities, and at more efficient administrative structures, including the number of divisions and departments.

To increase the budget for marketing is not enough; it is vital for institutions to work out institutional costs, tuition rates, and total budgets as interacting factors.

The best marketing is based on the knowledge of one's clients to the point that the institution's programs or services sell themselves (Drucker 1974). Institutions should know as much as they can about the students currently attending their institutions because they are the best predictors of future enrollees in the same market segment (Goodnow 1980). It is sound marketing to offer what students say they need if it fits into the institution's mission. Communicating the worth, the benefits of attending the institution, is the real "selling" point in higher education (Engledow and Anderson 1978; Lord 1975; Campbell 1977). Communicating information about existing programs and services leads to accessibility (DeCosmo and Baratta 1979).

Information about an institution attracts some students and turns others away. Turning away students who do not fit the institution is ultimately a good tactic; to some extent it eliminates later dropouts. Institutions that chase after prospects whose needs and interests lie elsewhere are only wasting valuable resources and may even be damaging the quality or the image of their institution.

Institutional research often neglects to follow up on the reasons why prospects who inquired about the institution did not apply for admission. Findings from this kind of research can help an institution refocus its market orientation, its promotional activities, and its programs.

The unresolved question in marketing of higher education centers around the impact and influence of competition upon the quality of education. In economics a free market spurs innovation, but higher education must decide whether a free market should be allowed to work its course. Competition may improve the quality of programs, but it may also encourage needless waste (McAdams 1975). When every institution expends large amounts of limited resources chasing after the same market pool the inevitable result may be survival of the biggest, and not necessarily the best, institutions.

It may be more accurate to say that colleges and universities are failing those who are not served rather than those they are serving (Johnson 1978). Still, institutions ought to proceed cautiously in developing new programs. Marketing involves risk taking (Campbell 1977), and some institutions cannot afford too many fruitless risks. Before venturing into new programs an institution should estimate the demand for the new programs and cost them out before proceeding with their implementation (Lee and Gilmour 1977).

One of the obligations inherent in an institution of higher education is to encourage and develop a learning society. It is not enough for higher education to serve up a smorgasbord of programs, no matter how successful such an approach may be economically or even academically. Surely, survival at any price is untenable; survival through unethical means is an abomination.

Even though many institutions do not pay as much attention to community outreach as they should, doing so is a necessity not a luxury. They must be just as concerned with preparing students for careers as meeting students' noncareer needs and interests (Lucas 1980). Determining employer needs is one realistic way of supplementing enrollments.

In the process of helping to build a learning society, higher education must discover and develop links with the community, particularly with its adult population (East and McKelvey 1980). By 1985, "five percent of the adult population 22 years of age or older could be attracted to undergraduate courses for college credit" (Cross 1981, p. 18). Even if these 7.75 million adults studied enrolled in only one course per semester, they would add up to the equivalent of 1.5 million full-time students. Most adults going to college already have full schedules of activities, such as full-time jobs and family responsibilities; at best they can pursue a college degree on a part-time basis, perhaps one or two courses each semester.

Part of the outreach to the community must include a market that has a high potential for higher education in the next decades—blacks and Hispanics. Now is the time for colleges and universities to develop those markets the same way they cultivated the women's market during the 1970s.

Colleges and universities might do well to review their practices regarding transfer students from community and junior colleges. In the past several years the number of students attending two-year institutions of

higher education for economic reasons has increased; by paying relatively lower tuition rates at such institutions they can afford to transfer for their last two years of college to a more prestigious, more expensive institution.

There are several steps an institution desiring to cultivate this transfer student market can take. Wolf (1973) suggests five provisions:

- A guaranteed admissions policy for students above some prescribed criteria
- A counselor or director, with support staff, specializing in the problems of transfer students
- Visits by appropriate staff people to community and junior colleges
- Specially tailored, on-campus information programs for community and junior college counselors
- Information to feeder institutions regarding the performance of individual students, to be provided upon their graduation (p.4).

The communications emanating from an institution to prospective students play an important role in forging the institution's image as well as in attracting students to enroll. That is why there is need for close cooperation among academic units, the public relations office, and the admissions/recruitment staffs on everything that is sent out from the institution. Furthermore, these communications should be in concert with the institution's image and its mission/goal statements.

The packaging of promotional materials in a highly competitive field calls for suggestions from current students as to style, format, photographs, and wording of the text. Prospective students are more favorably disposed to copy that is organized, honest, sincere, and personalized and showing happy, active students.

The timing and frequency of communications with prospects also influence students in choosing a college. Being first to reach a prospect is not as important as reaching the prospect at the right time. The best time in terms of translating applications to enrollments seems to be the latter part of spring of the junior year in high school.

Reaching out to prospects through high school teachers and counselors, college alumni, and college recruiters may have some limited usefulness, but more effective ways seem to include bringing prospective students to the college campus accompanied by their parents for a structured visit with several representative faculty members.

Among the first contacts prospects have with the institution are the secretaries and staff members who answer telephone inquiries and letters, greet visitors, and interact with the public; the interest, care, and concern they show, or fail to show, the inquirer may determine whether the prospect applies for admission. An attitude or a tone of voice that implies the staff member is doing the inquirer a favor is certain to dampen interest in that institution. It is of utmost importance that these staff members be given specific training in how to be courteous and helpful to inquirers and to students who apply for admission.

The tighter the competition among institutions for enrollments, the greater the temptation to resort to tactics that are less than honorable and sometimes border on outright violations of honesty. The overt examples of questionable marketing practices occur in advertising college programs. Some institutions are capitalizing upon human weakness, desires, and emotions by implying that attending a particular institution may "assist in the fruition of sexual fantasies. The cover of one school's information brochure was emblazoned with a coed striding away from the camera. One half of the young lady was clad in tight blue jeans, the other in a polka dot bikini" (McAdams 1975, p. 235).

Another outcome from the marketing crunch is the lowering of admissions standards and the offering of courses and programs of questionable academic value (Lubin 1980; McAdams 1975).

In addition, there is a danger that the scramble for bodies "may put students on the auction block, with recruiters bidding bucks for brains as they have done in the past for brawn" (Larson 1980, p. 40).

Basically, there is no inherent conflict between an institution marketing its products and services and, at the same time, maintaining its professional standards and ethical behavior (O'Brien 1973). The integrity of higher education and fair practice do not have to be compromised if sound marketing principles and practices are followed. Institutions should follow codes of conduct in their recruitment. Wolf (1973) has suggested that such codes might include what is and what is not allowable concerning: "pirating" students away from other institutions; conveying exaggerations (puffery) about the quality of particular programs or life-styles on the campus; the policy, if any, regarding different admissions standards for certain groups or types of students; and publicity about any substantial advanced payment requirements for students who accept an admissions invitation (p. 4).

Every college and university can profit from a marketing program that is understood in its broad implications as presented earlier, but small colleges, particularly private ones, may gain more from marketing than large colleges and universities because these smaller institutions have more flexible policies, can react quickly to changes, and can communicate programs and purposes clearly (Engledow and Anderson 1978).

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